United Nations S/2018/41

Security Council

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Letter dated 15 January 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I write regarding the completely untrue allegations contained in the identical letters dated 2 January 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations (S/2018/6), which alleges that United Arab Emirates aircraft have violated the airspace of Qatar.

The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns and rejects the baseless claims made by the Government of Qatar. It is regrettable and worrying that the Qatari Government has persisted in its irresponsible course of action, whose consequences are nefarious and detrimental to the interests of the States of the region and regional and international peace and security. The United Arab Emirates recalls that the principles of respect for sovereignty and good neighbourliness require States to refrain from fabricating incidents, scaremongering and distorting the facts.

Before addressing the substance of these false accusations, I should like to draw your attention to the discrepancies, inaccuracies and deliberate misrepresentation of international law and the unprofessional approach shown by the Qatari letters. Those attributes confirm our strong conviction that the accusations are mendacious and fabricated.

For example, the letters contained in document S/2018/6 misrepresent the laws and principles that the Qatari Government seeks to invoke. The United Arab Emirates stresses that the relevant customary international law is codified in paragraph 1 of article 58 (Rights and duties of other States in the exclusive economic zone) and article 87 (Freedom of the high seas) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The existence of an exclusive economic zone does indeed grant coastal states certain rights of an economic nature, such as the exploitation of the seabed of the area and some priority with regard to fishing. However, all States in the exclusive economic zone enjoy the freedoms granted by international law in the high seas, including the freedom of navigation and the freedom of overflight without prior notice or authorization from the coastal State.

It follows that the activities of the United Arab Emirates in the aforementioned exclusive economic zone, to which the identical letters from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations refer, took place in exercise of the freedom of overflight over the high seas, which does not affect or conflict with the economic rights guaranteed under international law to the coastal State of the exclusive economic zone, and does not mean that the United Arab Emirates has

Please recycle

violated the sovereignty of Qatar. Accordingly, Qatar's claims are false and its conduct inappropriate.

In order to set out the facts, I have the honour to enclose herewith two reports issued by the Air Operations Command, Headquarters of the Air Force and Air Defence, General Headquarters of the Armed Forces, along with their annexes. Report 1 shows the route of the F-16 aircraft (serial number 0403), which, according to the letter from the Qatari Government contained in document S/2018/6, violated the airspace of Qatar by flying over its exclusive economic zone. As indicated in report 1, the aircraft was on a training mission within a United Arab Emirates' military training area D/EU-2. During the training mission, the aircraft flew for one minute over the international waters controlled by the Bahrain Area Control Centre (see annex E of report 1). Annex A of report 1 indicates that the manoeuvre area of that aircraft was within a United Arab Emirates training area (OMR-54). It shows the aircraft's path, confirming that it flew over international waters for one minute. The other annexes of report 1 display the path, coordinates and timings of the aircraft, which show that it never approached Qatari airspace or came close to the area of the Qatari marine firing range (OTD-28). The latter is monitored by Bahrain's regional radar from an altitude of 24,000 feet and above. Although the aircraft did not enter the firing range, its altitude was 33,400 feet, i.e. within the area controlled by the regional radar of Bahrain. All claims made by Qatar are therefore fabricated and unfounded.

Report 2 and its annexes describe an incident that took place on 27 December 2017, in which Qatari combat aircraft intercepted two United Arab Emirates aircraft (CASA CN-235 numbers 812 and 813), and sent out a call to three other United Arab Emirates aircraft (an Avanti, a C-17 and a C-130) to move away from Qatari territorial waters, even though those aircraft were north of and outside the territorial waters of Qatar and within Bahraini airspace on that date. Report 2 details a number of serious violations committed by Qatar, which require urgent consideration:

1. A call was sent out to the aircraft while they were landing at Isa Air Base and were in contact with air control within the Bahrain airspace.

2. The aircraft were intercepted while following international airways approved by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

3. Qatari regime combat aircraft came within 100 feet of the United Arab Emirates aircraft, causing a threat to air safety.

Lastly, the United Arab Emirates recalls that the collective measures taken by countries that are committed to maintaining the safety and stability of the region were taken in order to urge the Government of Qatar to reconsider its policies and its provocative positions, and to call on Qatar to respect its international obligations, including regional and international treaties, in the hope that Qatar would show a genuine commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Saud Hamad Ghanem Hamad **Alshamsi**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex to the letter dated 15 January 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report 1

Confidential

Ref.: *qaf-jim-dal*/*qaf-'ayn-jim*/*'ayn* 143
21 Rabi' II, A.H. 1439 (8 January, A.D. 2018)

Joint Operations Centre/Current Operations Unit

Subject: Letter of protest from Qatar

Re: your letter *mim-'ayn-shin*/*shin-'ayn-jim*/*'ayn* 143/35 of 7 January 2018

1. Enclosed herewith are annexes A, B, C, D and E, displaying the route of the F-16 aircraft (serial number 0403) which Qatar claims violated its airspace and flew over its exclusive economic zone at 33,400 feet and a speed of 460 knots for one minute without the prior knowledge of the Qatari authorities.

2. Qatar claims that the training mission of the above-mentioned aircraft constitutes a flagrant violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The truth is that the above aircraft was on a training mission within United Arab Emirates military training area D/EU-2 and, for one minute, flew over international waters in the area controlled by the Bahrain Area Control Centre, as shown in annex E.

3. Annex A makes it clear that the manoeuvre area of that aircraft is within training area OMR-54 of the United Arab Emirates. The flight path shows that it flew over international waters for only one minute. The other annexes show the flight path, coordinates and timings of the United Arab Emirates aircraft. These show that the aircraft never approached the airspace of Qatar or came close to the area of the marine firing range of Qatar (OTD-28). That area is controlled by the Bahrain Area Control Centre from an altitude of 24,000 feet. Although the United Arab Emirates aircraft did not enter that firing range, it was in any event flying at an altitude of 33,400 feet, i.e. within the area under the control of the Bahrain Area Control Centre. It follows that all of the claims made by Qatar are fabricated and without basis.

4. The foregoing is provided for your information.

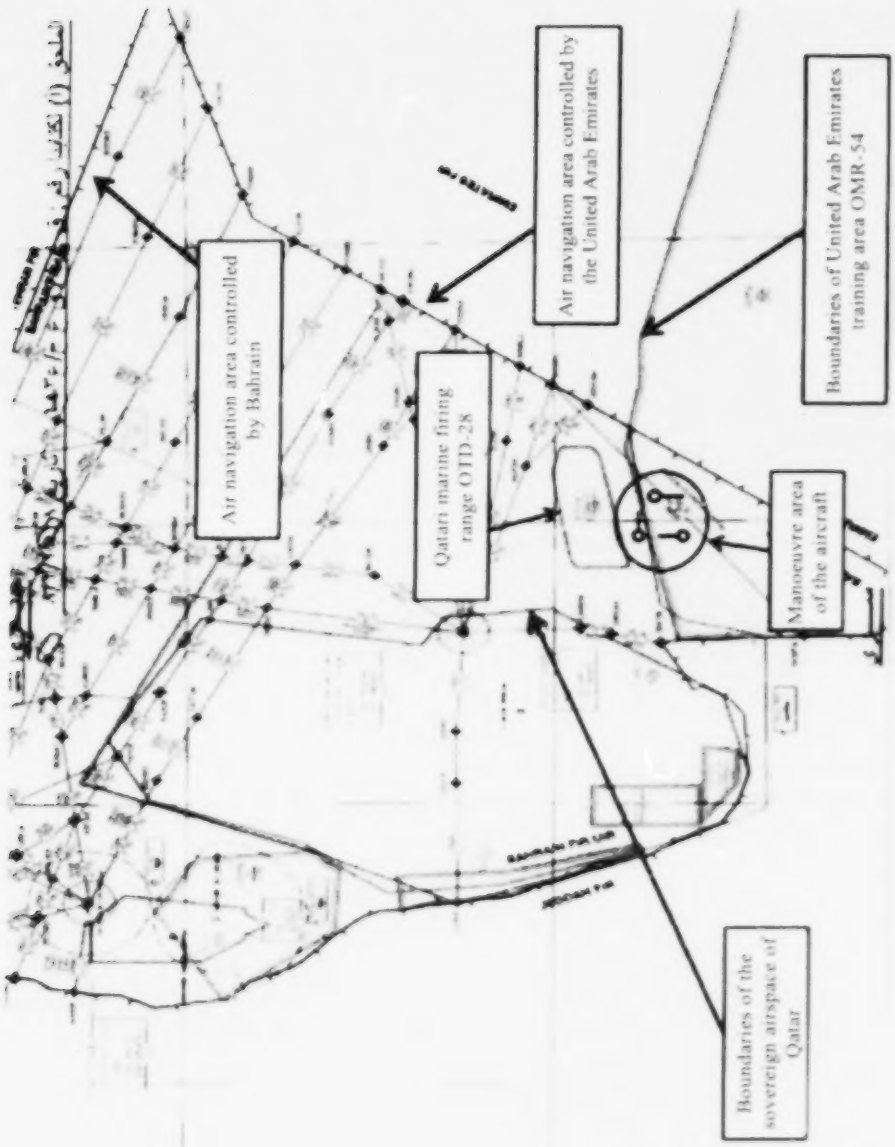
Brigadier General Hilal Sa'id Hilal **al-Qubaysi**
Acting Commander of Air Operations

Annexes: A through E

Copied: Office of the Commander of the Air Force and Air Defence, for information

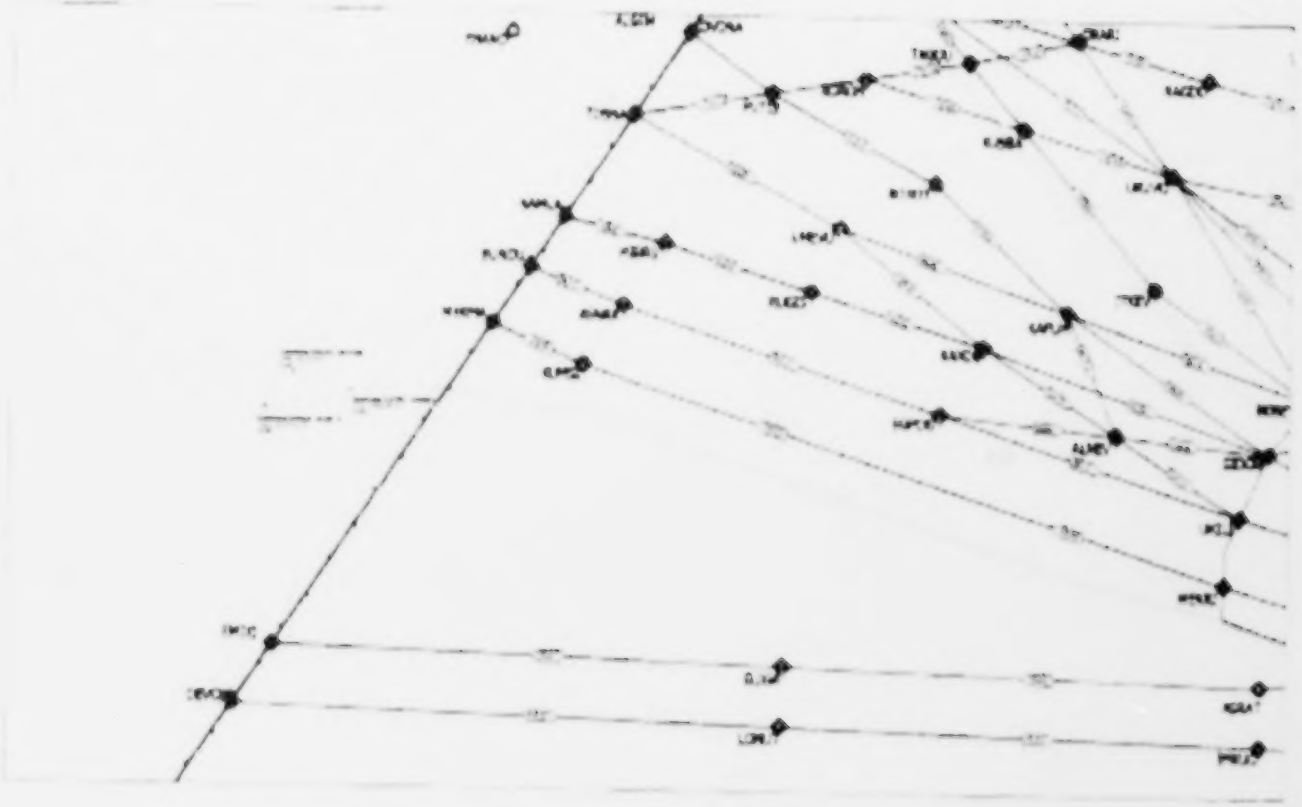
Operations and Training Department

Annex A


Air navigation area controlled by Bahrain
Air navigation area controlled by the United Arab Emirates
Boundaries of United Arab Emirates training area OMR-54
Qatari marine firing range OTD-28
Manoeuvre area of the aircraft
Boundaries of the sovereign airspace of Qatar

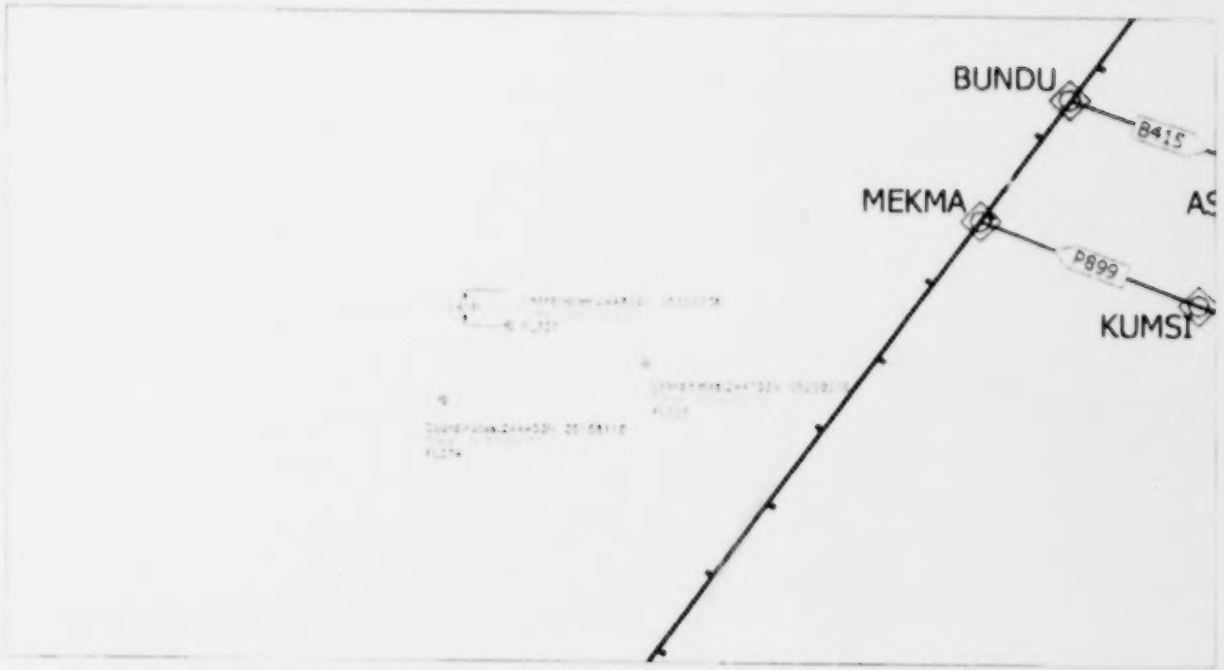
Annex B of our letter *qaf-jim-dal/qaf-'ayn-jim/'ayn* 143 dated 8 January 2018

Flight vs. OTD-28



Annex C of our letter *qaf-jim-dal/qaf-'ayn-jim/'ayn* 143 dated 8 January 2018

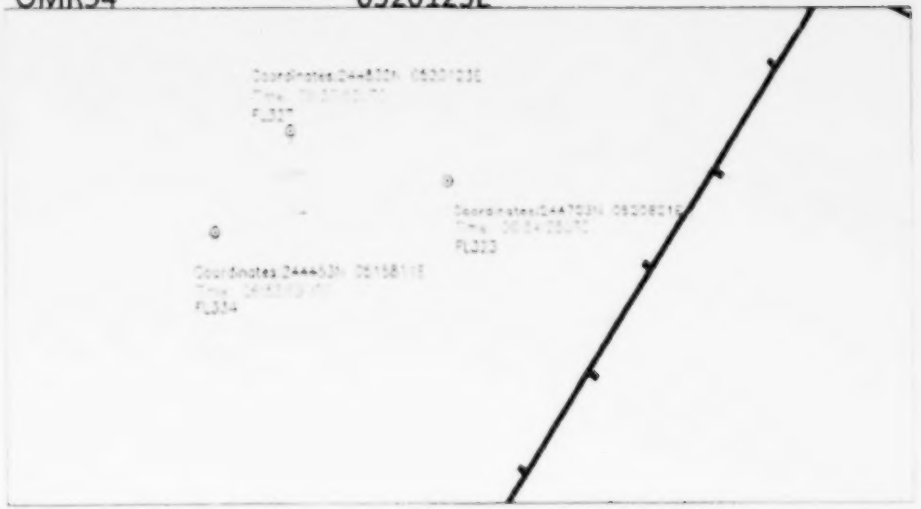
Flight vs. OTD-28



Annex D of our letter *qaf-jim-dal/qaf-'ayn-jim/'ayn* 143 dated 8 January 2018

Flight path

	Coordinates	Time	Level
Exit from OMR54	244453N 0515811E	06:53:09	FL334
Furthers point out of OMR54	244832N 0520123E	06:53:50	FL327



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Annex E of our letter *qaf-jim-dal/qaf-'ayn-jim/'ayn* 143 dated 8 January 2018

سـري

Flight Vs Qatar Territorial water
Source: ICAO
2015 12 June
FIR WORLD
Software
ArcGIS online
Viewer

Report 2

Confidential

Air Force and Air Defence

Air Operations Command

Operations and Training Department

Report on aerial interception carried out by Qatari combat aircraft on 27 December 2017

1. General comments: The air forces of the Qatari regime intercepted two United Arab Emirates aircraft (CASA CN-235 serial numbers 812 and 813 respectively), and sent out a call to three other United Arab Emirates aircraft (an Avanti, a C-17 and a C-130) to move away from Qatari territorial waters, even though the aircraft were in Bahraini airspace, north of and outside the territorial waters of Qatar.

2. Sequence of events:

(a) The C-130 aircraft (call sign 1733): The aircraft took off at 0502Z hours from Al-Reef airport, on the United Arab Emirates-Bahrain airway. During its landing and final approach to Isa Airbase, the Qatar air controller sent out a call to the aircraft to exit Qatari airspace and instructed it to turn right and head north. The pilot then contacted the Bahraini air controller and informed him of the incident. The Bahraini air controller confirmed to the pilot that he was in Bahraini airspace. The pilot also used the gauges of the aircraft to check that his location was 12 nautical miles from Isa Airbase. The aircraft proceeded to land at the airbase.

(b) The CASA CN-235 aircraft (serial number 812, call sign 1753): The aircraft took off at 0524Z hours from Al-Reef airport on the United Arab Emirates-Bahrain-Sharurah airway at 16,000 feet. It exited United Arab Emirates airspace at 0605Z hours. A review of the radar images shows that two armed Mirage 2000 aircraft (call signs 2340 and 2341) took off from Al-U deid Airbase. The first took off at 0610Z hours, the second at 0612Z hours. The distance between the two combat aircraft was approximately 30 nautical miles. After they took off, the Qatari air controller send out a call to the United Arab Emirates aircraft instructing it to move away from the territorial waters of Qatar. At the time it was intercepted, at 0618Z, the United Arab Emirates aircraft was at coordinates 25.52.34.00 N, 52.15.02.00 E, within Bahraini airspace in international waters on airway ORMID-UP699-SOGAT. The Qatari combat aircraft came within 100 feet of the United Arab Emirates aircraft, causing a serious threat to air navigation. Owing to the close distance, the pilot of United Arab Emirates aircraft was able to note the serial number of the Qatari combat aircraft (QA96) and documented it through video recording. The Qatari combat aircraft continued manoeuvring around the United Arab Emirates aircraft in a dangerous manner in order to drive it north, further from Qatari territorial waters. The pilot of the United Arab Emirates aircraft informed the Bahraini air controller of the incident. The latter instructed him to change his direction 15 degrees to the right, towards the north, in order to move away from Qatari territorial waters. However, the Qatari combat aircraft continued to manoeuvre around the United Arab Emirates aircraft until it arrived at coordinates 26.26.42.00 N, 51.16.43.00 E at 0638Z hours. The interception by the Qatari combat aircraft continued for 20 minutes. The pilot of the United Arab Emirates aircraft tried to contact the two Qatari combat aircraft several times through the emergency international frequency, urging them to keep their distance; but his call went unanswered.

(c) The CASA CN-235 aircraft (serial number 813, call sign 1754): The aircraft took off at 0543Z hours from Al-Reef airport on the United Arab Emirates-Jordan airway at 16,000 feet. It exited United Arab Emirates airspace at 0625Z hours. A review of the radar images shows that after the Qatari combat aircraft intercepted the first United Arab Emirates Aircraft, CASA CN-235 (serial number 812), they also intercepted the second United Arab Emirates aircraft, CASA CN-235 (serial number 813), at 0644Z hours at coordinates 26.16.42.00 N, 52.00.25.00 E, while it was within Bahraini airspace over international waters and on an international airway. The Qatari combat aircraft came within one nautical mile of the United Arab Emirates aircraft and continued to manoeuvre around it in order to drive it north, further from Qatari territorial waters. The Bahraini air controller informed the pilot of the United Arab Emirates aircraft that Qatari combat aircraft were approaching his aircraft and instructed him to change his direction 20 degrees to the right, towards the north, in order to move away from Qatari territorial waters. However, the two Qatari combat aircraft continued to manoeuvre around the United Arab Emirates aircraft until it reached coordinates 26.28.57.00 N, 51.13.06.00 E, at 0701Z hours. The interception by Qatari combat aircraft continued for 17 minutes, after which the combat aircraft returned to Al-Udaid airbase, where they landed at 0718Z hours.

(d) The Avanti aircraft (serial number 1207, call sign 3436): The aircraft took off at 0627Z hours from Al-Bateen airport on the United Arab Emirates-Ha'il-Cairo route at 30,000 feet. It exited United Arab Emirates airspace at 0653Z hours. After it had entered Bahraini airspace, the Bahraini air controller informed the pilot that Qatari combat aircraft had intercepted the United Arab Emirates CASA CN-235 aircraft (serial number 813), and instructed him to change his direction 10 degrees to the right, towards the north, in order to move away from Qatari territorial waters. A review of the radar images shows that no attempt was made to intercept the aircraft, as the two Qatari combat aircraft were by then returning to Al-Udeid Airbase. The Qatari air controller sent out a call to the United Arab Emirates aircraft instructing it to move away from Qatari territorial waters. The aircraft continued its flight to its planned destination.

(e) Aircraft C-17 (serial number 1225): The aircraft took off at 0755Z hours from Al-Reef airport on the United Arab Emirates-Ha'il-Cairo airway at 24,000 feet. After it had entered Bahraini airspace, the Bahraini air controller instructed the United Arab Emirates pilot to change his direction by 10 degrees in order to avoid Qatari airspace as a precautionary measure in view of the previous interception. However, the Qatari air controller sent out a call to the United Arab Emirates aircraft instructing it to move away from Qatari territorial waters. The pilot informed the Bahraini air controller, who directed him to turn another 10 degrees to the right, towards the north. The aircraft continued its flight to its planned destination.

(f) This sequence of events leads to the conclusion that the Qatari regime has been seeking to intercept our aircraft in furtherance of its aggressive stance towards the States that have imposed an embargo on it.

3. Violations committed by the Qatari regime:

(a) Qatar sent out calls to aircraft while they were landing at Isa Airbase and while they were in contact with air control in Bahraini airspace.

(b) Qatar intercepted our aircraft using armed Mirage 2000-5 aircraft while flying on ICAO-approved international airways.

(c) The Qatari regime combat aircraft came within 100 feet of United Arab Emirates aircraft, causing a threat to air safety.

4. Conclusion:

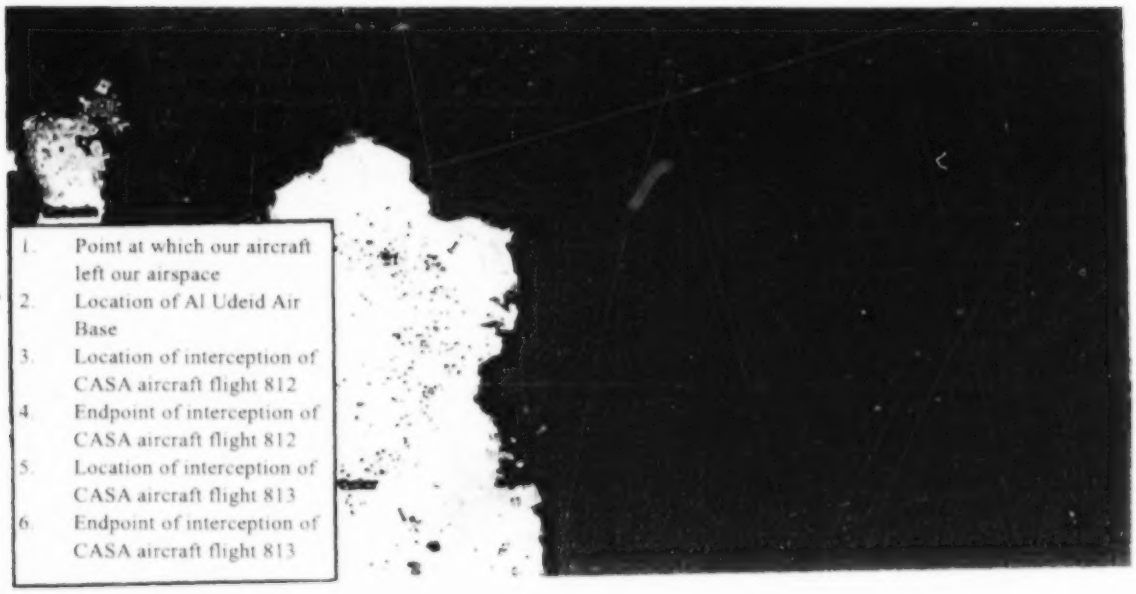
(a) Our aircraft complied with the designated and customary flight path, in accordance with the flight plan that had been sent in advance to ICAO. However, the Qatari regime endangered the safety of our aircraft by intercepting them with armed combat aircraft.

(b) The Qatari regime attempted to interfere with and intercept our aircraft under the pretext that they entered its territorial waters. That pretext is spurious: all of the interceptions took place far from the Qatari coasts at a distance not less than 30 nautical miles. Furthermore, by coming within 100 feet of the United Arab Emirates aircraft, the Qatari aircraft caused a threat to air safety, particularly as those actions took place over international waters and within Bahraini airspace.

(c) Based on the sequence of events and timing, and upon review of all the available information, it can be concluded that the incident was premeditated by the Qatari regime. This shows that the Qatari regime intended to escalate the situation, particularly in the light of embargo.

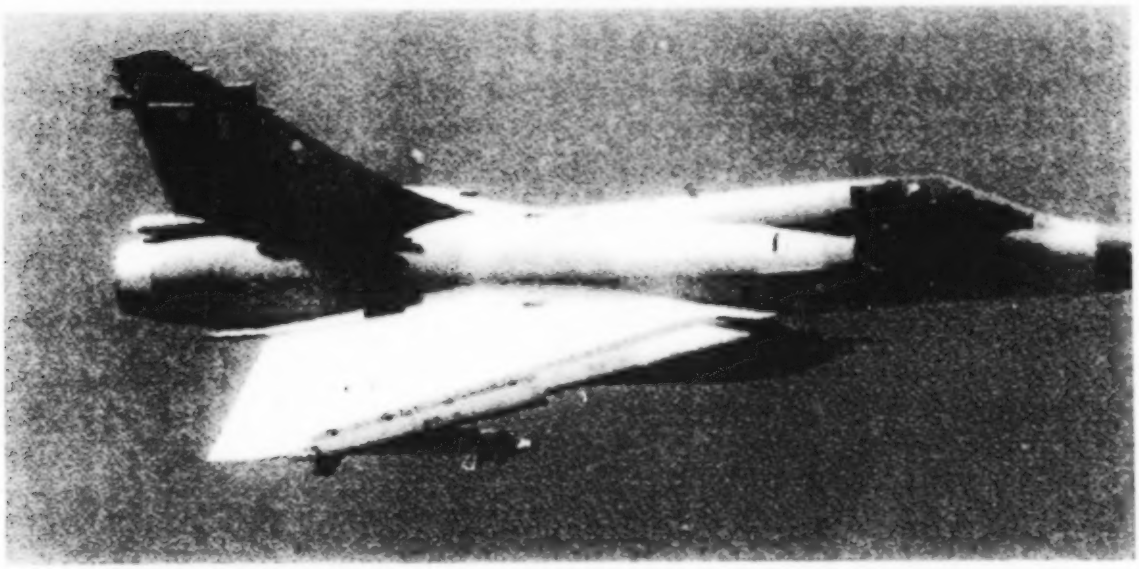
Annex A to the report on aerial interception carried out by Qatari combat aircraft on 27 December 2017

Map showing the major event locations

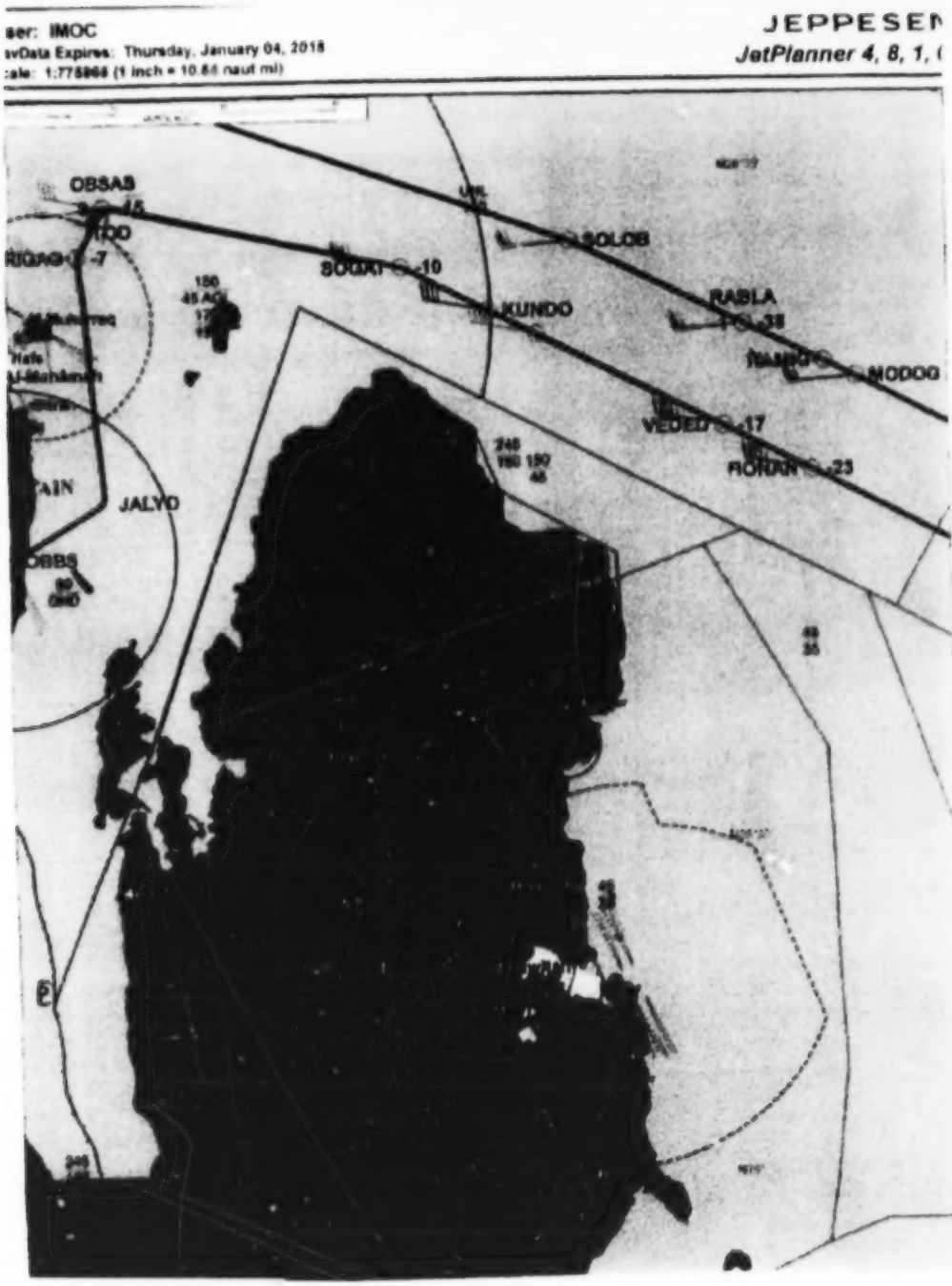

1. Point at which our aircraft left our airspace
2. Location of Al Udeid Air Base
3. Location of interception of CASA aircraft flight 812
4. Endpoint of interception of CASA aircraft flight 812
5. Location of interception of CASA aircraft flight 813
6. Endpoint of interception of CASA aircraft flight 813

Annex B to the report on aerial interception carried out by Qatari combat aircraft on 27 December 2017

Photograph taken by the captain of the Emirates aircraft showing how close the Qatari combat aircraft came to our aircraft



Armed Qatari Mirage 2000-5 aircraft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